

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3348

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 5352

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, JM

SUBJECT: JAMAICA'S ELECTION: MORE VIOLENCE

1. THERE HAS BEEN MORE VIOLENCE IN THE CAMPAIGNING FOR THE DECEMBER 15 GENERAL ELECTIONS. THE MOST DISTURBING REPORTS HAVE COME FROM BROWNS TOWN IN ST ANN WHERE THE PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) CANDIDATE, SENATOR ARNOLD BERTRAM, ALLEGES THAT HE AND A GROUP OF FOLLOWERS WERE FIRED ON BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS IN THE EARLY MORNING OF DECEMBER 7. AT THE SAME TIME, THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY (JLP) CLAIMS THAT ITS CANDIDATE, MRS. PRINCESS LAWES, IN THE SAME CONSTITUTENCY (NORTH WEST ST ANN) WAS ALSO ATTACKED BY GUNFIRE AS SHE AND A PARTY OF JLP WORKERS WERE RETURNING ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 6 FROM A CAMPAIGN MEETING IN A NEARBY TOWN; IN THIS LATTER AFFRAY, FOUR PERSONS WERE REPORTEDLY WOUNDED, ONE SERIOUSLY.

2. THE CAMPAIGNING IN NORTH WEST ST ANN HAS CLEARLY RAISED PASSIONS, WHATEVER THE TRUTH OF THE VARIOUS CHARGES MAY BE; THIS CONCLUSION IS BUTTRESSED BY THE FACT THAT THE INCIDENT INVOLVING MRS. LAWES WAS THE SECOND SUCH. HOWEVER, PASSIONS REIGN EQUALLY HIGH ELSEWHERE. HERE IN KINGSTON, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE DAILY BEATINGS, STABBINGS AND

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SHOOTINGS OF AND BY JLP AND PNP ADHERENTS, AND

OCCASIONALLY NEAR RIOTS OCCUR. YESTERDAY A JLP PROCESSION ALLMAN TOWN WAS ATTACKED BY PNP SUPPORTERS. THE POLICE SOUGHT TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCE BUT BEFORE ORDER WAS RESTORED, FOUR MEN WERE SHOT BY THE POLICE AND THE LOCAL POLICE STATION WAS PLACED BRIEFLY UNDER SIEGE BY THE ANGERED CROWD. THESE EVENTS IN KINGSTON ARE NOT, HOWEVER, UNIQUE. THERE ARE STORIES REACHING US DAILY OF SIMILAR HAPPENINGS ELSEWHERE. WHILE THEY ARE PROBABLY VERY OFTEN EXAGGERATED, THEY ARE FIRM REMINDERS OF THE CURRENT FERMENT. MOREOVER, THEY REMIND US OF THE HEAVY BURDEN NOW BEING BORNE BY THE SECURITY FORCES.

GERARD

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